



# COMMISSION ON DISABILITIES MINUTES

**Monday, January 14, 2008  
6:00 PM**

*FIFTH FLOOR LARGE CONFERENCE ROOM, CITY HALL,  
3900 MAIN STREET, RIVERSIDE, 92522  
GENERAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT, 951-826-5427*

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## **MISSION STATEMENT**

*"The mission of the Commission on Disabilities is to promote greater awareness of, respect for, and the total participation of individuals with disabilities into all aspects of life."*

CALL TO ORDER: 6:00 PM

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

1. Roll Call: Chairperson Paul Van Doren, Susanne Puffer, Gigi Welch, Linda Garcia, Lesley Robinson, and Donald Hawecker

Debbie Keller arrived at 6:08 PM and James Stream arrived at 7:20 PM.

ABSENT (excused): Gene Brosious and Heather Chmaj

Also in attendance were, Emergency Services Manager Anthony Coletta, Deputy City Attorney Neil Okazaki, Interim Fleet Director Susan Cox and ADA Coordinator Monique Gordon.

2. **Introductions and Public Comment Period** - This is the portion of the meeting specifically set aside to invite your comments regarding any matter within the Commission's jurisdiction.
  - a. Pam Anderson, Director of American Red Cross Local Chapter
  - b. Julie Pardini, Response Director of American Red Cross
  - c. John Lonberg – Resident
  - d. Donna Kirchoff – Inland Regional Center
  - e. Edwin and Bev Richards – Residents
  - f. Roberta Dabo – Resident (Audio signal for lights to assist the blind)
  - g. Brenda Varcie – Resident

Edwin Richards noted his letter dated 12/2/07 and a Press-Enterprise article from October 10, 2007 addressed to City Council and the Mayor. He briefed the COD on his views of the handicapped parking violation problem. He made the following recommendations to assist in cutting down the use of stolen, borrowed or counterfeited handicapped placards in the City of Riverside:

- The Police Department should break down the parking citation statistics to indicate the number of handicapped parking violations, as done by the City of Hemet.
- During the holidays, that the Police Department have more visible patrols of the shopping areas during peak shopping times.

- That the Police Department periodically stop obvious or suspicious able bodied appearing persons exiting cars and request their DMV identification receipt as required by the DMV.
- That the Police Department provides statistical results on disabled parking abuse as done by San Jacinto-Hemet article.
- Review the internet site: [www.handicappedfraud.org](http://www.handicappedfraud.org).
- Note the COD in the government meeting section of the paper
- Note COD in the Press-Enterprise Resources and Services Section.

Mr. Lonberg noted that RPD has a handicapped parking patrol. He noted that the statistics for the handicapped parking patrol was available. He also noted that the Officers wrote very few parking violations since they were very busy with other Police issues and that is why the handicapped parking patrol existed. Officers will contact a volunteer when they observe parking violations.

Mr. Van Doren noted that tracking citations and publicizing them was a good idea. He noted that the COD has been working on transit and sidewalk obstructions. The COD plans to get statistical reports from the CE so that the success of these endeavors can be measured, monitored and publicized. He noted that disabled parking was a very critical issue and that tracking statistics on this particular issue would be important. Suspected abuse of disabled parking is an issue that RPD may be interested in tracking so that any problems could be resolved.

Ms. Roberta Dabo wanted to inquire about who she would contact to request audio installed traffic signals at Rubidoux and LaRue. She had difficulty crossing the street since she cannot see when the signal changes. Ms. Dabo was provided a phone number in Public Works and advised that she could call 311 at any time and be directed to the appropriate place for help.

Brenda Varcie noted that she had received a ticket for partially parking on disabled “hashmarks” next to a disabled parking space because the adjacent vehicle had parked badly and there was not adequate room. She noted that she was fighting the citation and fine. She felt it was unfair because the ticket for this offense was so much more expensive than other parking violations. Ms. Varcie submitted a letter of complaint concerning her disabled parking violation and was advised that parking violations were a matter for RPD Traffic Division.

### 3. Minutes for the meeting of December 10, 2007

M/S Hawecker/Garcia to approve the minutes as corrected.

AYES – 7: (Van Doren, Stream, Welch, Garcia, Keller, Robinson, Hawecker); NOES – 0; ABSTAIN – 1 (Puffer); ABSENT – 2 (Brosious, Chmaj)

### OLD BUSINESS

#### 4. Code Enforcement Information concerning Courtesy Reminder Distribution

Code Enforcement (CE) responded to the COD question: Approximately how many of the Courtesy Reminders will be distributed to residents and over what period of time? CE response was that Courtesy Reminders will be distributed on an as needed basis when neighborhoods and areas that need reminders are identified. Volunteers were due to begin reminder distribution to two specific neighborhoods by early January. CE would report on the number of reminders distributed each month.

Commissioner Hawecker noted that his entire neighborhood had received courtesy reminders concerning sidewalk obstructions. It is important to call 311 when violations are noted so that CE will know what neighborhoods to remind.

CE has committed to providing the COD with statistics on courtesy reminder distribution.

## 5. Commission on Disabilities Term Limits and Nomination Process

The COD discussed Commission vacancies and noted that two positions were due for renewal. It was noted that both Ward 3 positions (Stream and Hawecker) were due to be renewed. The vacant position is in Ward 5.

A memo was provided to the COD concerning ward versus city-wide COD positions. The Mayor's Nominating and Screening Committee met on January 8, 2008, but no information had been provided concerning the outcome of that meeting.

After discussion of this item, the COD had additional questions concerning vacancies and appointments. A representative from the City Clerk's office will be invited to address the COD at the February meeting.

## 6. Public Works Survey of Disabled Access to City Parking Garages

### NEW BUSINESS

## 7. Disaster Preparedness and the Disabled Community – Presentation by Emergency Services Manager Tony Coletta

Tony Coletta is the City of Riverside Emergency Services Manager and manages a staff of two. He is responsible for the readiness and response recovery to extraordinary events or disasters. His is a readiness response organization that readies the plan which may or may not be exercised. They are very involved in the activities, incidents and issues that occur in the geographical boundaries of the City of Riverside.

Julie Pardini was introduced and is the Director of Response with the American Red Cross. Pam Anderson is Director of the American Red Cross local chapter. Mr. Coletta noted that the American Red Cross is an example of the type of collaborations and partnerships that the City is involved in because the City cannot respond adequately to any disaster or catastrophic event without the collaboration of organizations like the Red Cross. The Red Cross would be in charge of sheltering residents in case of a disaster.

Emergency Services Manager Coletta addressed what the City has been doing in regards to people with disabilities and noted what the plans are currently and where the City is headed.

- The City has a Emergency Operations Plan which has been in place since the late 1960s, revised in 2002 and is currently being rewritten to bring up to current national standards. One of the important current standards is an emphasis on special needs. Revision of the special needs annex has not yet been completed but is currently being developed. The City uses this plan in its response to large scale emergencies. The annex portion will be brought up to local, state and federal standards. A collaboration of organizations concerning particular hazards and emergency support functions may be referred to in the planning process.
- Ready Riverside is a new multi-year campaign that will be focusing on four audience groups: (1) families and households, (2) children and child care providers, (3) seniors and those with disabilities and (4) small businesses. There are basic things that these four audiences are being asked to do: Have a kit, have a plan, be aware of hazards and get involved as a volunteer, through organizations. The new website is called Ready Riverside which is the flagship part of the program to get information out to the community.
- This calendar year will be Phase 2 and will focus on the four audiences, drilling down to the community level with readiness and preparation outreach at community centers, boards and commissions, senior centers and schools, to name a few. The goal is to inform the audiences on what they should be doing and what their obligations are.

Emergency Services Manager Coletta explained that preparedness was having the kit and a plan and knowing what to do in case of an emergency. Readiness is exercising a communications plan or home evacuation plan – has it been practiced? Readiness is the step after being prepared.

One of the training programs is the Community Emergency Response Team Training. It is a 20 hour basic disaster response program that is federally certified and taught by local fire department and other public safety organizations within the City. How to put out small fires, light rescues, first aid, organizing my street or community in case of a disaster are areas covered in this training. This way the community can be self sustaining until public safety is available. This program is open to everyone and empowers people on how to be aware, prepared and able to respond locally to emergencies. This program is very inclusive and open to various levels of ability.

Emergency Services Manager Coletta discussed the local assistance center that sheltered Katrina victims who made their way to this area. The local assistance center was a "one stop shop" for people needing medical, mental health counseling and other services. Through collaboration and partnerships with organizations such as the Red Cross, the Katrina victims had their needs met.

He noted that the American Red Cross was chartered to provide care, shelter and human services for certain types of disasters. The City relies on the Red Cross and other organizations to care and shelter those displaced by disasters. Sheltering disaster victims is the Red Cross area of expertise.

Pam Anderson, Director of the local Red Cross chapter, noted that when they are helping evacuees, they ask victims if they had a plan. Approximately 80-85% say that they have no kit and they have no plan and no provisions. Everyone should have a plan. She noted that for the disabled, the Red Cross may not immediately have everything required to meet their immediate needs. Through partnership with other organizations, the needs can eventually be met.

Commissioner Robinson noted that she had attended the State Independent Living Council and this topic was discussed. She noted that many of the disabled who presented themselves during the last local disaster were refused entrance or not treated properly because the proper equipment was not available or staff did not know how to handle the situation. Commissioner Robinson noted that the COD wanted to reach out so that for the next disaster, shelter staff would know what to do. She applauded the Red Cross staff for reaching out and creating a partnership with the disabled community so that in the future, shelter staff would know what to do for the disabled.

Julie Pardini, Red Cross Director of Response, noted that volunteer training was necessary so that they understood what to expect at the shelters and what they might encounter. She clarified that the Red Cross does not evacuate or transport people. They do a lot of training. She requested that if interested, she will provide a point of contact in her office to present information to specific groups of people. She would like to set up in-service training so groups can cross train some of her staff on specific disabled needs that have not been addressed. Her staff can cross train with specific groups so that they can understand what to expect in a disaster shelter; there are many expectations that can be addressed. She noted that there would likely not be specialized medical equipment because Red Cross provides mass care services and their top priority would be shelter, food, hygiene, blankets, basic first aid. Medication issues are referred out, but nurses are at each shelter. Nurses provide intake services and ask if there are specific health issues, such as if evacuees possess medication or if there are other special needs.

In response to a question from the COD concerning how quickly the disabled can be cared for in case of a disaster and where they should go, Emergency Services Manager Coletta responded that information would be distributed by television and radio. If power is out, information will be received by Charter Cable, who have a back-up generator, and Reverse 911. The community should have a self help network that will check on disabled neighbors.

Where will the disabled be sheltered? Emergency Services Manager Coletta responded that first, the seven (7) high schools would be used as shelters because they are ADA compliant, have showers, cooking facilities and bathrooms. Not every building, City facility or church can be used as a shelter.

In response to a question concerning if the City had a reverse 911 system, Anthony responded that the City did have such a system called City Watch. City Council has recently approved replacement of the City Watch system with a new system that is up to current standards. A Reverse 911 is a system used by the City or jurisdiction to contact residents during an emergency. This system will include unlisted numbers unless residents choose to opt out. The office of emergency services lets Red Cross know where it is safe to set up a shelter. Actual shelter locations are dictated by the disaster or event.

In response to a question from the COD concerning development of a list of the disabled so that they could be easily located in case of emergency, Emergency Services Manager Coletta noted that there were a lot of problems with lists, but other organizations with their own registries such as, Public Utilities (critical care customers), the Community Services District, Riverside Transit Authority and others have registries available that would help locate the disabled in case of a disaster. County Public Health and the State Department of Rehabilitation are licensed care facilities. There are various partners utilized since not one specific list/registry encompasses all of the disabled residents.

Emergency Services Manager Coletta offered to come back to work through and discuss any issues that are of interest to the COD.

8. ADJOURNMENT: 7:33 pm.

These minutes were approved by the Commission on Disabilities at the February 11, 2008 meeting.

Respectfully Submitted,

Monique Gordon  
General Services, Admin. Analyst  
951-826-5427